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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ZAGREB 003939

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USVIENNA ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

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E.O. 12356: 10/1/00
TAGS:
SUBJECT: A/S SHATTUCK AND AMB. GALBRAITH SEE GRAVE SITE
NEAR KLJUC, DISCOVER A POSSIBLE BORDER PROBLEM

REF: STATE 231615

SUMMARY

1. (U) VISITING DRL A/S SHATTUCK, AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH, DRL/BA DIRECTOR COFFEY, AND EMBASSY PAO, POLOFF AND DART TRAVELED TO WESTERN BOSNIA SEPTEMBER 29. THEY TALKED WITH OFFICIALS AT THE UNPROFOR BIHAC CANTON HQ NEAR CAZIN, MET THE NEW MUSLIM MAYOR OF BOSANSKI PETROVAC, VISITED THE SITE OF AN ALLEGED MASS GRAVE NEAR KLJUC, AND FOUND A POTENTIAL BORDER PROBLEM AT KULEN VAKUF. END SUMMARY.

V CORPS STRETCHED THIN BUT SERBS NOT RESISTING

2. (C) DANISH SECTOR COMMANDER COLONEL E.B. DAM, AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS COORDINATOR (PHAC) RUSS BALLANTYNE, AND THE BANGBAT UNMO LEADER BRIEFED ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. DAM SAID THE BOSNIAN FIFTH CORPS HAD ADVANCED ALMOST 200 KILOMETERS IN SIX DAYS, AND NOW HAD TO COVER A CONFRONTATION LINE OF 103 KM AND PATROL THE TERRITORY WITH ONLY 20,000 TROOPS. BOSNIAN TROOPS WERE ALSO STATIONED ON THE CROATIAN-BOSNIAN BORDER.
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THE VII CORPS HAD SECONDED ONE BRIGADE TO V CORPS COMMANDER DUDAKOVIC, GIVING HIM 10 BRIGADES. DAM BELIEVED DUDAKOVIC WOULD TAKE MRKONIC GRAD AND TRY TO TURN THE EXPERT LIGHT INFANTRY CORPS ON PRIJEDOR UNLESS POLITICAL PRESSURE FROM SARAJEVO AND NEW YORK STOPPED HIM. ONE ARKAN BRIGADE HAD ARRIVED IN PRIJEDOR 10 DAYS EARLIER, DAM SAID. THE RECENT V CORPS SUCCESSES, DESPITE INCREDIBLE ODDS (THE SERB HAD OVER 60,000 TROOPS IN THE BANJA LUKA AREA), AND THE LACK OF A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE BY THE BSA HAD CONVINCED DAM THAT THE SERBS HAD PURPOSELY EVACUATED THE AREA. THE SERBS EXPECTED TO GIVE UP MUCH OF THIS TERRITORY IN POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS ANYWAY, HE COMMENTED.

REFUGEES, REFUGEES

3. (U) THE UN ESTIMATED THAT 11,000 DISPLACED PERSONS (DPS) WOULD REACH THE CANTON FROM OTHER PARTS OF BOSNIA, MOSTLY BANJA LUKA. THE GOBH CLAIMED THE NORTHERN BIHAC CANTON COULD NOT ACCOMMODATE THEM, AND WANTED TO PLACE THEM IN THE NEWLY LIBERATED AREAS. 400-500 MUSLIM REFUGEES FROM THE BANJA LUKA REGION HAD ALREADY RESETTLED IN THE NORTH. UNHCR AND CANTON AUTHORITIES DID NOT WANT TO SETTLE THESE REFUGEES IN THE EMPTY HOMES OF THE ABDIC REFUGEES AND WERE SEARCHING FOR HOUSING. THE GOBH HAD PUBLICLY WELCOMED BACK MOST OF THE ABDIC REFUGEES, BUT REFUSED TO DECLARE ANOTHER AMNESTY. BALLANTYNE SAID THE SARAJEVO AUTHORITIES HAD DECLARED THE 1994 AMNESTY STILL VALID. THE BOSNIANS, CROATS, AND TURKS WERE DISCUSSING ESTABLISHING A TRILATERAL POLICE FORCE IN THE AREA TO
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GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF THOSE WHO RETURNED. BALLANTYNE
ESTIMATED THAT 10-15 PERCENT OF THESE REFUGEES WOULD NOT
BE ALLOWED BACK INTO BOSNIA BECAUSE THEY WERE ACCUSED OF
COMMITTING WAR CRIMES.

14. (U) BALLANTYNE ESTIMATED THE CURRENT POPULATION OF
KLJUC AT 1100. 620 MUSLIMS HAD SURVIVED THREE AND A HALF
YEARS OF SERBIAN OCCUPATION AND HAD REMAINED IN THE TOWN.
AFTER UNPROFOR HAD PROTESTED THE RESETTLEMENT OF 207 DPS
IN KLJUC, AT THE CONFRONTATION LINE, THE GOVERNMENT
STOPPED THE PLANNED RESETTLEMENT OF ANOTHER 3000. CROATIA
REFUSED TO TAKE THESE PEOPLE, AND HAD RECENTLY STOPPED
ALLOWING THE DPS TRANSIT THROUGH CROATIA AT DVOR, TO THE
BIHAC CANTON. THE GOC REFUGEE REPATRIATION ORDER, UN
OFFICIALS SAID, MIGHT SEND MANY MUSLIMS BACK TO THIS
TERRITORY BEFORE THE AREA IS SECURE.

ON THE ROAD

15. (U) THE DELEGATION TRAVELED BY ROAD THROUGH BIHAC TO
BOSANSKI PETROVAC. THE NEW MUSLIM MAYOR OF THE TOWN SAID

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ACTION EUR-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00	ANHR-01
	SRPP-00	EB-01	OIGO-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01
	PM-00	PRS-01	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	STR-01	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRM-10	PRME-01
	DRL-09	G-00	/033W				

-----F4A911 101031Z /38

O 101026Z OCT 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7546
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA
USLO SKOPJE
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
DIA WASHDC
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-5PMA/J21//
SECDEF WASHDC//ISA/ISP//
NSC WASHDC
NATO EU COLLECTIVE

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THE CURRENT POPULATION WAS ABOUT 1500. BEFORE THE WAR, PETROVAC WAS THE ELEVENTH LARGEST TOWN IN BOSNIA, WITH A POPULATION OF 15,000. 3200 MUSLIMS HAD LIVED HERE, HE SAID, AND ONLY A FEW CROATS. THE TOWN WAS DEEP IN ABH-HELD TERRITORY AND WAS SAFE FROM SHELLING, HE REASSURED US, ADDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO MOVE DPS INTO THE AREA, ALTHOUGH ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLY PROBLEMS EXISTED.

16. (U) THE TOWN WAS INTACT, AND HAD EXPERIENCED LITTLE DAMAGE DURING THE FIGHTING. UNTENDED LIVESTOCK RAN EVERYWHERE -- REMINISCENT OF AN OLD WESTERN FILM, AN UNSADDLED HORSE BOLTED IN FEAR DOWN THE STREET, ALMOST RAN INTO THE AMBASSADOR, TURNED THE CORNER AND DISAPPEARED. SEVERAL PEOPLE WERE MILLING AROUND, SOLDIERS IN UNIFORM AND REFUGEES CONFUSED ABOUT THEIR FATE. ONLY A FEW VEHICLES WERE IN EVIDENCE. AT ONE APARTMENT BLOCK, REFUGEES FROM PRNJAVOR AND BOSANSKI NOVI RECOUNTED THEIR GRIM PAST. TWO EXPENSIVE GERMAN CARS WERE PARKED IN A SHED NEARBY, REPORTEDLY BELONGING TO VISITORS WHO CAME FROM MUNICH TO SEE THEIR ELDERLY PARENTS.

17. (U) THE VILLAGES SURROUNDING PETROVAC, HOWEVER, WERE RUINED. A SPARSELY POPULATED AREA EVEN IN NORMAL TIMES, THE BIHAC-PETROVAC-KLJUC ROAD WAS DESERTED. CLOTHING AND BLANKETS LITTERED THE ROAD, MARKING THE PATH THE SERBS HAD
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USED TO FLEE. MOST LARGE BUILDINGS AND RESTAURANTS HAD BEEN RECENTLY BURNED. THERE WERE BROKEN-DOWN CARS AND THREE BURNED-OUT TANKS. IN A FIELD PAST PETROVAC, AN OLD JNA PLANE FROM WWII THAT HAD BEEN A MONUMENT TO AN IMPORTANT VISITOR AT THE NEARBY AIRFIELD WAS RIDDLED WITH BULLET FIRE. NEAR KLJUC, A MOSQUE HAD BEEN RAZED TO THE GROUND, WITH ONLY ITS DOME INTACT TO REMIND PASSERS-BY OF WHERE IT HAD ONCE STOOD. THE UN TOLD US THE ABH HAD CLEARED THE MAIN TERRITORY OF SERB SOLDIERS, BUT SNIPERS STILL HID IN THE WOODS IN THE HILLS NORTH OF THE ROAD. THEY WERE SUPPORTED BY POCKETS OF SERB CIVILIANS WHO HAD BEEN UNABLE TO LEAVE BEFORE THE BOSNIAN ARMY SWEEPED PAST THEM.

KLJUC GRAVE SITE

18. (U) NEAR KLJUC, THE SHATTUCK/GALBRAITH PARTY TURNED NORTH ONTO A GRAVEL ROAD NEAR CRVENLJA ZEMLJA. THE V CORPS LIAISON OFFICER TO THE UN LED US TO THE NOW-INFAMOUS SITE OF AN ALLEGED MASS GRAVE. THE ESCORT SOLDIERS STRICTLY FORBODE THE DELEGATION AND REPORTERS FROM TAKING ANY PICTURES. 200 METERS DOWN A MUDDY HILLSIDE, THE AMBASSADOR AND A/S REACHED A DITCH WITH A HUMAN SKELETON. THE SKULL AND RIB CAGE HAD BEEN EXCAVATED AND OLD, TATTERED BITS OF CLOTHING WERE VISIBLE AROUND IT. THE LIAISON OFFICER SAID OTHER BODIES HAD BEEN DISCOVERED IN THIS DITCH AND IN A CAVE LOCATED TWENTY METERS TO THE LEFT. AUTHORITIES HAD STOPPED THE EXCAVATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER IT BECAME APPARENT WHAT LAY UNDERNEATH. AN EXPERT
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FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL (ICTY) HAD INVESTIGATED THE SITE EARLIER THAT MORNING, AND TWO OTHER SIMILAR LOCATIONS NEARBY.

KULEN VAKUF -- A LITTLE BORDER ADJUSTMENT AHEAD?

19. (U) FOR THE RETURN TRIP TO ZAGREB, THE PARTY HAD PLANNED TO CROSS THE BRIDGE OVER THE UNA RIVER AT KULEN VAKUF AND THEN CROSS INTO CROATIA. FOUR KILOMETERS OUTSIDE THE TOWN, OUR UNMO GUIDE POINTED OUT WHERE HE HAD FOUND 15 BODIES (CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, MALE AND FEMALE)

IN THE UNDERBRUSH NEAR THE ROAD THE PREVIOUS DAY. TWO WERE DECAPITATED. THE DANISH UNMO SAID SOME CORPSES APPEARED TO BE TWO WEEKS OLD, WHILE OTHERS APPEARED TO BE MORE RECENT VICTIMS. THE CORPSES HAD BEEN REMOVED, BUT ONLY RECENTLY; THE AREA STILL STANK OF DEATH.

110. (U) KULEN VAKUF WAS A HIGH MUSLIM MAJORITY TOWN IN A PICTURESQUE RIVER VALLEY. THE BORDER BETWEEN BOSNIA AND CROATIA IN THIS AREA IS DEFINED MOSTLY BY THE UNA RIVER. HOWEVER, IT JUTS OUT INTO CROATIA, AROUND THE TOWN OF

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	STR-01	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRM-10	PRME-01
	DRL-09	G-00	/033W				

-----F4A915 101031Z /38

O 101026Z OCT 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
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KULEN VAKUF AND THE MOUNTAIN BEYOND, ALTHOUGH THE RIVER ITSELF FLOWS THROUGH THE TOWN. THE BRIDGE HAD BEEN SHELLED NEAR THE MUSLIM SIDE AND WAS IMPASSABLE FOR THE PARTY'S VEHICLES. THE CROATIAN ARMY (HV) HAD CROSSED INTO BOSNIA AND HAD OCCUPIED THE TOWN. THE CROATIAN FLAG FLEW AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, ABOVE A MAZE OF RAZOR WIRE AND SANDBAGS WHICH DISCOURAGED WOULD-BE VISITORS FROM CROSSING.

111. (U) THE AMBASSADOR AND A/S WALKED TO THE OTHER SIDE, TO GREET THE IRRITATED HV SOLDIERS. EVIDENCE OF WAR DAMAGE WAS EVERYWHERE, ALTHOUGH THE RAILROAD BRIDGE APPEARED WHOLE. CROATIA PLANS TO OPEN THIS RAIL LINE

CONNECTING ZAGREB AND SPLIT IN A FEW WEEKS. THE MUSLIM MAYOR APPROACHED THE AMBASSADOR AND APPEALED FOR HELP TO ALLOW THE ORIGINAL RESIDENTS TO RETURN. MOST OF THEM WERE EAGER TO RETURN, HE CLAIMED, BUT THE CROATS WERE REFUSING ENTRY TO ALL BOSNIANS. THE HV SOLDIERS WERE CLEARLY RELIEVED WHEN THE U.S. PARTY CROSSED BACK TO THE ABH-HELD SIDE OF TOWN. COMMENT: THE OCCUPATION OF KULEN VAKUF MAY SOON BECOME ANOTHER BLEMISH ON FEDERATION RELATIONS IF THE HV DOES NOT PULL BACK TO THE INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED BORDER.

12. SARAJEVO MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

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GALBRAITH

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